

CHIEFLINE

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Paige, Ridge Unveil New Web Resource, www.ed.gov/emergencyplan to Help Schools Plan for Emergencies: \$30 Million to Be Available to School Districts for Emergency Planning

In an effort to provide school leaders with more information about emergency preparedness, U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige and U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge announced a new section on the U.S. Department of Education's web site -- www.ed.gov/emergencyplan -- designed to be a one-stop shop to help school officials plan for any emergency, including natural disasters, violent incidents, and terrorist acts.

Among the resources on the website are a two-page document, *Emergency Planning for Schools*, that provides a fundamental overview of the issues to be considered in an emergency plan. First and foremost is the importance of addressing terrorism as part of a larger response strategy that includes natural disasters and other types of violence.

In addition to the website, Paige also announced that \$30 million is available in FY 2003 to help school districts improve and strengthen emergency response and crisis management plans. Funds could be used to train school personnel, parents, and students in crisis response; coordinate with local emergency responders including fire and police; purchase equipment; and coordinate with groups and organizations responsible for recovery issues such as health and mental-health agencies. An additional \$30 million is included in the proposed FY 2004 budget.

Applications for this program will be available in early spring 2003. Funding decisions will be made in the summer.